

**SOUTH DOWNTOWN  
RAIL  
UNDERPASSES  
RECONSTRUCTION  
PROJECT**



## **Setting the Record Straight -- South Downtown Rail Underpass Project**

Over the past week the City has received several calls from citizens asking about the status of the South Downtown Rail Underpasses Project. Inaccurate information is being circulated. The following facts are to help set the record straight with regard to the project status and funding.

***Q: Is it true that the railroads will fund the entire cost of the railroad bridge replacement project if the alignment of the rail remains as it is today?***

**A:** No, that is not accurate. Following a two-year extensive public and stakeholder input process and technical analysis of more than two dozen potential alternatives, a Preferred Alternative was recommended that meets all City goals and needs for the project. M1 is the Preferred Alternative based on the technical analysis and evaluation of all the alternatives.. As key stakeholders, the City has been working closely with the BNSF and UP Railroads throughout the alternatives development and analysis process. The City is now moving forward with completion of preliminary design plans for the Preferred Alternative, more detailed cost estimating and is beginning the process of identifying funding for construction. The City is pursuing an agreement with the railroads to review the preliminary plans.

***Q: What funding sources are being pursued for the project?***

**A:** The City will pursue a funding strategy for timely financing through a combination of City, regional, federal, state and railroad sources. The railroad has given the City no indication it will cover the entire replacement cost of the bridges if they are rebuilt in the same place as they are now. But they will be a funding contributor for the project. The City will be seeking a Federal Railroad Administration Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant to fund part of the project now in preliminary design. For the City's contribution to the cost, the City will look at placing the project on the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority renewed list of projects. Those funds would not be available until 2025 at the earliest.

***Q: Is the only reason for the City reconstructing the rail bridges so that larger delivery trucks (semi's) can get under to supply the business on South Tejon Street?***

**A:** The Preferred Alternative provides several benefits as noted below. However, the primary impetus for the project is that the two bridges (one over S. Tejon Street and one over S. Nevada Avenue) have exceeded their design life. Numerous repairs have had to be made to the bridges over the past several years. While the railroad owns one of the bridges, the City owns the other and it is incumbent that both entities properly maintain the structures. Replacement becomes a necessity when repairs alone aren't enough. For the safety of the community, the bridges are at the point of needing to be replaced. And the proximity of the

two bridges make it most efficient to replace the two bridges together in one project. It is also true that the current height of the bridges do not meet current City bridge clearance standards (the standard is 16'-6"). Nevada Avenue is an alternate route when Interstate-25 is closed so bridge heights need to also accommodate the larger trucks.

***Q. What are the benefits of the Preferred Alternative identified through the Rail Underpasses planning process?***

**A.** The Preferred Alternative for the reconstruction of the rail bridges and the ideal location of the rail line effectively addresses railroad operational, maintenance and safety needs as well as provides numerous other project benefits:

- Maintains and improves traffic operations on Nevada Avenue, Tejon Street, and intersecting streets.
- Will enable the City to achieve current clearance standards underneath the Nevada and Tejon rail bridges.
- Includes a neighborhood desired Quiet Zone.
- Addresses pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety across the railroad tracks as well as sidewalk deficiencies.
- Bridge design and associated improvements are compatible with and improve access to surrounding neighborhoods and land uses. They are supportive of potential development opportunities after planning for the Drake Power Plant decommissioning, passenger rail and other community improvements (such as the bridge under Las Vegas Street and connecting the Shooks Run trail to the Legacy Loop).
- Addresses cost-effectiveness to construct and maintain the bridges. The M1 Preferred Alternative is the lowest cost of all the alternatives analyzed.

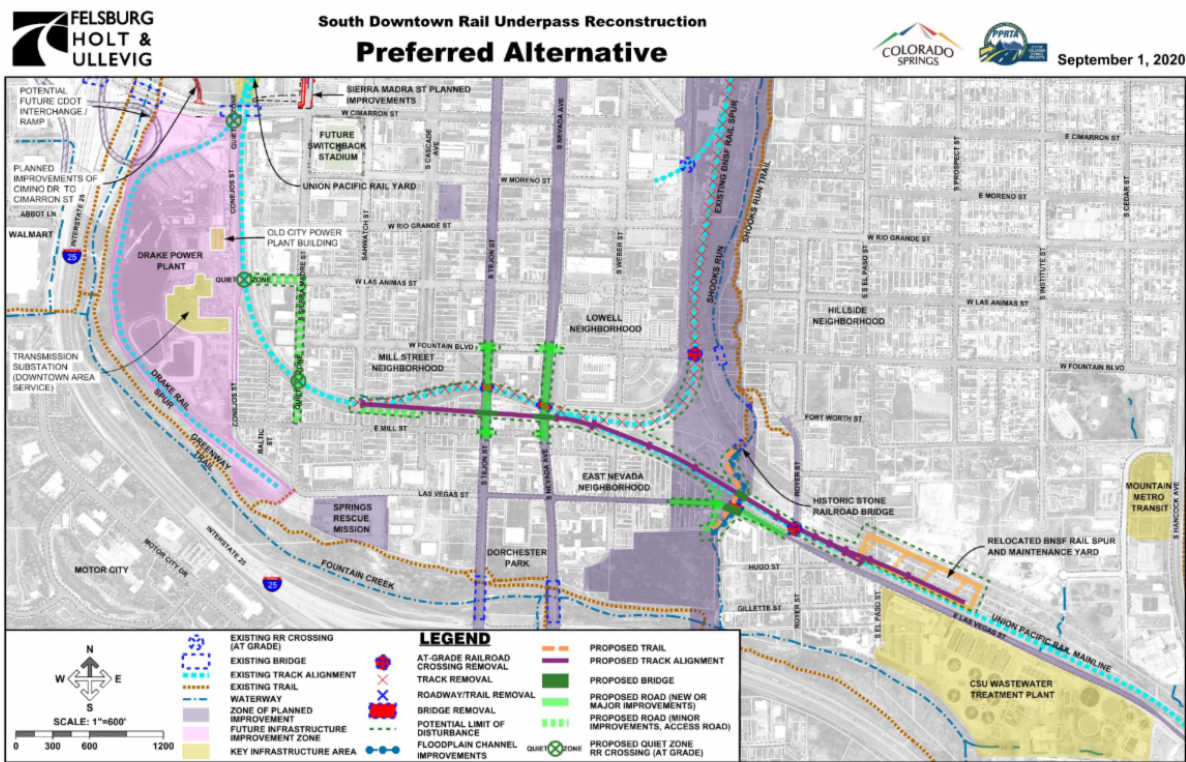
[CLICK HERE](#) to view additional questions and answers about the project.

In November 2020 the public provided feedback on the Preferred Alternative, gave input and asked questions of the project team during a virtual public meeting.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view the virtual meeting PowerPoint presentation.

Visit the Project Website - Public Engagement Tab to view the recorded digital public meeting presentation: [ColoradoSprings.gov/RailUnderpassReconstruction](https://coloradosprings.gov/RailUnderpassReconstruction)

[CLICK HERE](#) for enlarged Preferred Alternative map.





South Nevada Bridge (70 years old)



South Tejon Bridge (115 years old)

## Project Process and Schedule

- 2018: Project Initiation and start of stakeholder and public outreach
- 2019: Planning – Alternatives evaluation and recommendation
- **2020-2021: Preliminary design and property owner/stakeholder engagement (current effort)**
- 2022: November construction ballot initiative election
- 2023-2024: Final design and railroad negotiations
- 2025: Earliest year for start of construction

## Project Team

- City of Colorado Springs Project Manager - Aaron Egbert
- Design Engineering Consultant - Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
- Planning Consultant - Design Workshop
- Public Engagement - Bachman pr

**To Learn More, Visit the Project Website:** [ColoradoSprings.gov/RailUnderpassReconstruction](https://coloradosprings.gov/RailUnderpassReconstruction)

To receive project updates, send an email to [Monica@Bachmanpr.com](mailto:Monica@Bachmanpr.com) and request to be added to the project database.



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